

King, John

Oct 1914, June 1915

King & Sinclair
Barristers, Solicitors, Notaries, etc.

JOHN KING, K.C.

DONALD L. SINCLAIR.

Law Offices: Canada Life Chambers,
116 King St. West,

Toronto, Canada, Oct. 21, 1914 19

R. A. Falconer, LL.D.,
President of University,
Toronto.

Dear Dr. Falconer:

In common with other members of the University Senate, who were present at the last meeting, ~~of the Senate~~ ^{that} I was surprised to hear read the letter received from the ~~Bürser~~ ^{Secretary} with your report in favor of commemorating the work of the late Prof. Croft, which has been referred to the Governors of the University had been laid over for further consideration. On inquiry I find that the Board of Governors was not in possession of ~~the~~ material facts and information in regard to Prof. Croft's life and career which particulars ^{perhaps} should have been forwarded along with the report and which I will be glad that you will lay before them by the reading of this letter.

In the first place, as you may remember there was not a dissenting voice at the large meeting of the Senate at which the matter came up for discussion, in regard to commemorating Prof. Croft's work by connecting his name with that part of the building where he laboured so successfully for so many years. Every one felt that his services to the University and the Province should be so recognized. The only question was as to the name to be given to his old laboratory where the Senate now meets, and as you will remember the amendment to call the place the "Croft Room" instead of the "Croft Chapter House" secured only a very small vote - not more than four or five as I remember. I know Prof. Croft personally very well as did Prof. A. B. McCallum, Dr. Ellis, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Science, Dr. Clark, the head of the Toronto General Hospital, Prof. I. H. Cameron, the well known Surgeon and others whom I might mention. I am also familiar with his life and career and have prepared a memoir of him which is about to be published by the Macmillan Publishing Company along with memoirs which I have also written of the Rev. Dr. McCaul, first President of University College and of Dr. Forneri first Prof. of modern languages in University College. The following are a few of the material facts concerning Prof. Croft which I think should be known to the Board of Governors.

Prof. Croft was a member of an old English family, and had a brilliant career at the University of Berlin, which was his alma mater. On his return to England, when quite a young man and at the time when a Prof. of Chemistry was being sought for by the newly established University of King's College, Toronto, he was recommended for the appointment by Michael Faraday the distinguished chemist and leader of science in the last century. He came to Canada in 1842 and was the first Prof. of Chemistry and Experimental Philosophy in University of King's College afterwards the University of Toronto. He took up his work when King's College opened in 1843

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and retired in 1880 after 38 years of faithful service. On his arrival in Toronto as a member of the staff of King's College he found himself in the midst of the great controversy concerning the charter of King's College which, along with the endowment of the University was then under the control of the Anglican Church and was of a very sectarian character. Prof. Croft was a zealous English churchman, but he at once took the side of the "open door" in higher education in the Province which meant that the University should be open to all creeds, classes and denominations and should not be the principal appanage of any one church, or denomination. He rendered great service on that side at the critical juncture in the controversy, and for this, if for no other reason he should be very gratefully remembered by the University and by the people of the Province who were immensely benefited by the changes in the University which subsequently took place. Prof. Croft besides being a hard worker as long as he filled his professorial chair was also a man of affairs, more so perhaps than any other member of the Faculty of his time. He identified himself with a number of movements which have been of the highest benefit to the people of the Province. He was a distinguished chemist and toxicologist, and in his work was a close ally of both the legal and medical professions. He was appealed to from the farthest ends of the Dominion in cases of death caused by poison, and was frequently called upon to give evidence in our courts of justice in such cases. Hundreds of medical men ~~in~~ Canada profited from his work as a teacher of chemistry, chemical analysis and toxicology. Prof. Croft also identified himself very successfully with the Agricultural and Horticultural interests of the Province and was one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Agricultural College at Guelph. He was also the founder of the Entomological Society of Ontario which has done so much to benefit the Farmer and Horticulturist by extending a knowledge of the insect pests in Canada. The exhibit of this Society at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876 was spoken of and was, in fact, the finest in the World, and the publications of the Society have been sought for in all quarters of the Globe. Prof. Croft was also one of the founders of the Royal Canadian Institute, was President of the Institute and a contributor to its journal. He also took an active part in the founding of the Philharmonic Society of Toronto and was one of its most active members. He also founded the first musical quintette club in this City. He was himself a brilliant pianist and as a student in Germany had the offer made to him of appointment as court pianist to the blind King of Hanover. He was also the originator of the University Rifle Corps at the time when there was great danger of a war between Great Britain and the United States on account of the Trent affair. He then tendered his services to the Government for the purpose of raising the Rifle Corps, which took part in the defence of the Niagara Frontier during the Fenian Raid, which won the prize offered by the Government as the most capable and efficient

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Volunteer Company in Canada and which contributed more staff officers to the Volunteer Militia of Canada than any other Rifle Corps. These are a few of the facts concerning Prof. Croft with which the Board of Governors should be made acquainted.

I should also mention that Prof. Croft as I learned from the architects of the University was consulted as to the Plans of the laboratory and that he suggested the laboratory building should be modelled on the Plan of the Abbott's Kitchen in Glastenbury Abbey, Somersetshire, England with which he was well acquainted. This is another reason for connecting his name with the building.

In giving that portion of the building the name of the Croft Chapter House the Senate had this fact in mind and also the fact that the term Chapter house has been applied to places where business of a Cathedral and also for that matter of a University has been transacted. We all know that a great part of the business of the University of Toronto has been for some time past transacted in this particular place. There are plenty of precedents for the Senates proposal. The names of distinguished men have often been connected with portions of certain University Buildings, e.g., The Bodleian Library at Oxford University, the Ratcliffe Library, Moss Hall in our own City on the present sight of the Biological building. The same may be said of certain buildings connected with Harvard University and other American Universities. The History of our University is full of new precedents. The fact that it is a state institution should, I think, make no difference in regard to the matter because under the large powers conferred by the University Act on the Governors and Senate of the University they can surely be said to represent the people of the Province. I do not think there is any doubt that public opinion would endorse the Senate's proposal. I hope the Board of Governors will concur in their view.

I may say in conclusion that I have some personal interest in the matter in that? I understood at our Committee meeting, from something which was said by yourself that the Governors had already given their consent to the proposal, and under that impression I stated in my memoir of Prof. Croft that "the authorities of the University" had agreed in giving that part of the building the name I have mentioned in recognition of his services to the University and the Province. I read the page proof of the book some months ago, and I understand the publication has advanced so far that a correction cannot be made. I can only hope that no correction may be necessary at any time in the future.

Yours very truly,

John King

June 11th, 1915

John King Esq.,
4 Grange Road,
Toronto.

Dear Mr. King:

As I told you by telephone to-day I am glad to say that Dr. Pritchett sent me word yesterday that the Committee of the Carnegie Foundation is pleased to offer you a retiring allowance of \$1150. I am glad also to convey to you the message which I transcribe from the latter part of his letter.

"We should prefer, however, to have this matter pass through your hands, and we are quite willing to have you say to Mr. King that if he desires to retire, the Carnegie will be pleased to pay him a retiring allowance of \$1150.00, and this we should prefer to pay through the University. In making this statement, I beg that you will convey to Mr. King our appreciation of his devotion to the cause of law teaching and our high estimate of his action in giving up to a large extent active practice in order to devote himself to the teaching of law and to the writing of books upon legal subjects. We hope also that this retiring allowance may be of use to him, and that he may have many years of happiness and of contentment left to him. I ask that you convey this to Mr. King in such a manner as you may think best."

Yours sincerely,

President.

University of Toronto.
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE.

June 3rd, 1915

John King

born Toronto 15th September, 1843

B. A. University of Toronto 1864

M.A. " " 1865

B.C. 1870

In active professional practice at Berlin, Ontario, 1869-1893

Appointed lecturer at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, 1893.

Lectures on following subjects: "Criminal Law," 3rd year.

"Constitution of Statute Law", 3rd year

"Canadian Constitutional History and Law", First year.

Has lectured on "Procedure and Practice of Courts".

Member of Senate of the University of Toronto since 1879.

Publications:

"The Law of Defamation"

"Slander and Libel in Canada"

Papers and pamphlets on "The History of Newspaper Libel" and "Canadian Criminal Law of Libel", "Ontario Law of Libel", "The Newspapers and the Courts".

Articles in Canadian and United States law periodicals.

Editor Canadian cases in American Law Book Co's

"Cyclopaedia of Law and Procedure".

"Law of Criminal Libel".

Has in manuscript "The law of Contempt in Canada".